

Farmers' Champion

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SUCCEED BY DEEP PLOWING

Majority of Failures in Dry Farming May Be Directly Attributed to Shallow Methods Employed.

Deep plowing is the key to success in dry farming, and every failure may be attributed mainly to shallow plowing, and the complete evidence of this is to be found in the history of the early settlers, for not a single deep plow ever went broke or left the country.

There is no doubt that deep plowing is to some extent hard work but not nearly so hard as imagination represents it to be, and much easier in the end than surface farming which depletes the soil, wears out the farmer and gets nowhere.

There are hundreds of dry farmers or rather thousands who plow about six inches, pack, disk, harrow and cultivate day and night and Sundays and lose every year in wasted effort enough to keep themselves and families in luxury the year round.

The dry farmer has no expensive outlay, no water to pay for, no ditches to mend, no rheumatism to doctor, yet he gets irrigation prices for everything he raises; surely he can afford to plow, and even if he is short of horses, he can double up with a neighbor to the advantage of both.

We are glad to see that deep tillage is taking hold in the west, and several colonies and communities which have adopted it in Colorado, notably at Nathan and Limon, are raising the finest of crops even in dry years, are becoming prosperous, making money and boosting their land values in consequence.

In a recent article coming to our notice, Mr. Cyril Hopkins advances the theory that if we plow deep and raise big crops we will exhaust the soil, says the Dakota Farmer. We would be glad if this gentleman would tell us what to do with the soil except raise crops on it; he reminds us of the man who owned a gold mine and was afraid to develop it for fear of running out of gold.

These western soils are rich in mineral plant food, in fact we might say are made up of nothing else, and when we consider that the mineral part of plants and vegetation generally is only about six (6) percent of the whole, it is ridiculous to speak about using up the soil in this generation, so long as we conserve the humus—this is the point, and the only method ever discovered of doing this is deep plowing; plowing under the sod as deeply as possible at the start and after that as much of the stubble as can be afforded. The abandoned farms of New England, which everyone has heard about, were ruined by shallow plowing, surface farming, using up of humus, raising a little stuff on the cream of the soil without adequate plowing; soil robbery; burning the candle at both ends.

These farms are now being sought after by modern agriculturists and redeemed by deep plowing and the introduction of humus, and some of them are in better condition today than ever.

Shallow plowing destroys fertility by burning up the humus which is found mostly on or near the surface. Deep plowing preserves the soil by burying the humus where its gases are absorbed by the dirt instead of the atmosphere, and thereby conserved.

CREAM PAYS A FARMER WELL

Experiments Have Demonstrated That Couple of Cows Will Maintain a House and Family.

Those of the dry farmers who have been experimenting on selling cream instead of butter, have demonstrated the fact that a couple of cows will maintain a house and family. Feed for the cows costs nothing during the summer, as grass is plentiful and sufficient to produce a good flow of milk containing the required amount of butter fat. This experiment has

solved the problem of how to handle butter during the summer months. As cream brings fully as much or more than the butter from the same amount of milk, leaving the separated milk to be used sweet, as calf, hog or chicken feed, this business supplies the farmer with ready money each week as regular as he markets the cream, and by raising his own stock feed the cost of wintering the cows will not be felt.—Democrat, Las Animas, Colo.

Good Results With Alfalfa.

The farm department at the New Hampshire State hospital is greatly pleased with its experiment in alfalfa. Seed sown early in the spring is now yielding its fourth cutting. The first three cuttings yielded a total of 4½ tons of hay, and the fourth cutting will probably be left on the ground to protect the roots during the winter. It could be fed off as pasturage, but will probably do more good if left as a winter protection. This crop was sown on light land treated with two tons of air-slacked lime per acre and 1,000 pounds per acre of commercial fertilizer. The soil was inoculated from a piece of ground which has produced alfalfa and the seeds were soaked in nitro-culture. The seed was covered over lightly. The first three cuttings yielded about 1½ tons per acre each, the growth being about 18 inches high each time.

Horse Breeding.

In breeding mares, keep the same horse until the young mares are old enough to breed, then select another horse of the same type. Changing from one to another results in a nondescript assortment of progeny that never gets a breeder anywhere.

CROPS FOR WESTERN PLAINS

Drought-Resistant Plants Must Be Bred in Regions Where They Are Intended to Grow.

(By A. M. TEN BRUCK, Kansas Agricultural College.)

Up to the present time very little has been done in the way of breeding drought-resistant crops. The native grasses of the west thrive there by nature's breeding and selection and not by the hand of man. Nearly all of the other crops, and even the varieties of each which are grown successfully in the west, have been introduced from other lands which have a climate similar to that of the western plains. These crops are either native to the country from which they came or they are varieties of crops which have been developed in the older civilizations of the world, where man by persistently growing a crop and planting seed year after year for decades and even centuries has at last through natural selection produced varieties better adapted to resist the adverse conditions than the original variety from which the strain sprang. Such are the durum wheat, kherson oat, broom-corn millet, and the different kinds of sorghum. By this same natural selection certain varieties of crops grown in the west today are becoming gradually better adapted to the climatic and soil conditions in which they must grow. There is no doubt that by careful breeding and selection of seed natural selection may be hastened, by which plants and crops may become more hardy and productive. The farmer may make some improvement in crops by seed grading and selection, but crop breeding really belongs to the experiment station and the specialist, since great improvement in crops can only be secured by practicing careful, systematic breeding methods for a number of years.

Drought-resistant crops must be bred in the regions where they are intended to grow. They cannot be bred at the experiment stations located in humid climates. This is one reason why so little has been done along this line. We have had experiment stations in the mountain states

located in arid and semi-arid regions, but until recently these stations have only experimented with crops under irrigation.

TO CONSERVE THE MOISTURE

Cultivation to Depth of Two or Three Inches Will Accomplish Job to Great Extent.

(By F. L. KENNARD, Idaho Experiment Station.)

What concerns the farmer now is the holding of the moisture for the use of the growing crops. Frequent cultivation to a depth of two or three inches will accomplish this to a great extent. On all cultivated crops, such as corn, potatoes, beans and vegetables, the ground should be stirred every eight to ten days. As soon as the soil becomes firm or baked, moisture is conducted by capillarity directly to the extreme surface and passes off into the air. If on the other hand the surface two or three inches is loose and pulverized, soil moisture rises only to the lower edge of the mulch and cannot be taken off into the air.

A very simple experiment will illustrate. Take a cube of loaf sugar and place in a saucer in which has been previously poured about one-fourth inch of water. Note how quickly the water rises to the top of the cube. Now take a second cube, sprinkle on the top about one-fourth inch of granulated sugar. Then place the whole in the saucer with the first. Note the same rapid rise of water in the lower edge of the granulated top and how much more slowly it travels than the mulch of fine sugar.

The same process takes place in the soil, although not so exaggerated. Soil moisture does not move so rapidly, but move it surely will unless checked by the soil mulch. In sections where there are few weeds, the farmer is very apt to neglect the cultivation. Don't make this mistake. Remember that cultivation is not done merely for the extermination of weeds. In many sections no cultivation would be necessary if this were the only object.

TREES STOP SOIL DRIFTING

One of Perplexing Problems of Northwestern Farming Solved by Canadian Experiment Station.

Drifting of the soil is one of the big problems in northwestern farming. The trouble increases as the rainfall decreases. At the Canadian experiment station at Indian Head, Sask., this problem of drifting has been solved by planting trees. When the station was started twenty-five years ago it was part of a bonanza wheat farm on a level prairie. Now it has the appearance of a distance of being a woods. A belt of trees two or three rods wide has been planted around the farm, and between the fields—which are forty to sixty acres—a double row of trees has been planted.

This breaks the force of the wind so that the soil does not drift. This makes it possible to work the land to the best advantage. The rainfall here averages eleven and a half inches so that summer fallow has to be introduced frequently, and in order to make this the most effective it needs to be cultivated so as to keep down weeds. This can now be done on this farm without any trouble of drifting. Before the trees were planted this could not be done.

Remember the chickens have on their out of doors clothes all the time and will keep warm if their clothes are kept dry.

The Plymouth Rock stands at the head for market fowl and for large eggs. The Rose Comb Rhode Island Reds come next.

Every masculine looking hen should be avoided—such are not good layers and are not likely to be the dams of good layers.

For those who wish to raise large numbers of early chickens, or who keep only non-sitting breeds, the brooder is a necessity.

Furnish a generous supply of nests, for hens quarreling over favorite nests often break eggs in the fuss and the broken ones are eaten.

Food rich in protein, with a judicious proportion of carbonaceous elements to keep up heat and force, will enable a hen to lay freely.

Oats, with the outer husks removed or softened, combined with wheat bran, some corn, and a supply of meat, make an excellent laying food.